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## Theological Teachings of The Qadiani Ahmadiyya and The Jehovah's Witnesses: A Comparative Study

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**Abstract** : *Plurality in Indonesia has been dealt with a variety of religious sects that hold 'controversial' concepts of aqidah (religious creeds). Example includes the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses. This paper aims to study the core of religious teachings of the two sects, and how they are different from the mainstream. This work is a qualitative research with a comparative method, used to explore the diversity of religious understandings of the sects under study. This work found that both sects share some similarities as well as differences. concludes that there are similarities and differences between the two. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya denies Muhammad as the last messenger and believes that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who is a prophet, and has received God's revelation. Meanwhile, the Jehovah's Witnesses rejects the doctrine of Trinity and hellfire, believing that mankind will live eternally and God almighty will not torment people forever in hell. It can be concluded that these understandings are considered unique and often seen as deviating from the mainstream teachings.*

**Keywords** : *Theological Teaching, Qodyani Ahmadiyya, The Jehovah's Witnesses, Islam, Christian*

**Abstrak** : *Pluralitas di Indonesia telah menyaksikan munculnya gerakan keagamaan dengan konsep pemahaman akidah yang dianggap kontroversial. Diantara kelompok keagamaan tersebut adalah Ahmadiyah Qadian dan Saksi Yehuwa, yang keduanya berkembang*

*cukup pesat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji faham keagamaan dan perbandingan dari kedua aliran tersebut. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif dan menggunakan metode deskriptif comparative. Penelitian ini menemukan persamaan dan perbedaan dari kedua paham keagamaan ini. Paham Ahmadiyah Qadian menolak Muhammad saw. sebagai utusan Allah yang terakhir dan meyakini Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sebagai nabi yang menerima wahyu setelah Nabi Muhammad saw. Sedangkan Saksi Yehuwa menolak doktrin Trinitas dan menolak konsep neraka, sebab mereka meyakini manusia akan hidup kekal dan Allah Yehuwa yang memiliki personifikasi kasih tidak akan menyiksa orang selamanya di neraka. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa kedua paham keagamaan tersebut merupakan aliran yang dianggap unik dan sering kali dianggap menyimpang dari ajaran arus utama yang harus diantisipasi.*

**Kata Kunci :** *Ajaran Teologi, Ahmadiyah Qodyan, Saksi-saksi Yehuwa, Islam, dan Kristiani*

## A. Introduction

Truth claim has become a major theological challenge faced by religious communities. It refers to an act of self-justifying one's belief and condemning that of others, often with the use of violent actions.<sup>1</sup> An act of truth claim done on the basis of religious sentiments may divide religious followers into majority and minority groups, in which the latter often becomes an object of oppression from the former.<sup>2</sup> Normatively, all religions consist of teachings considered sacred by their adherents. As these teachings are put into practices in daily lives by the believers, they become the essence of religions. In line with this, the dynamics of religious communities in Indonesia has witnessed the emergence of sects which hold religious teachings distinctive from those held dear by the majority religious communities. According to Azyumardi Azra, the rise of these sects was due to their dissatisfaction with the established understandings and institutions of major religions, arguing that the latter is no longer able to accommodate the current situations.<sup>3</sup> Kuntowijoyo also argued that this phenomenon has

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<sup>1</sup> Amir Tajrid, "Kebenaran Hegomonik Agama, Jurnal Walisongo" Vol. 20, no. 1 (2012): 194.

<sup>2</sup> Fritchof Schuon, *Mencari Titik Temu Agama-Agama* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1987), 54.

<sup>3</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Konteks Berteologi Di Indonesia: Pengalaman Islam* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), 10.

many to do with the sharpening polarization in society.<sup>4</sup> In general, however, the emergence of these sects is triggered by the difference in perspectives, giving rise to the birth of different ideas.<sup>5</sup>

Nowadays, religious discourses and practices in Indonesian public spaces are marked by the rise of religious groups that separated themselves from what is considered as the mainstream groups and teachings of major religions. World's major religions are all divided into various schools and sects whose number is larger than the number of the major religions themselves. Departing from this phenomenon, this research aims at studying two religious sects which have rapidly expanded in Indonesia. They are the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Both have their own uniqueness. Apart from the fact that they were imported from outside Indonesia, they managed to find a warm place in the hearts of Indonesian religious adherents, be it seen in terms of theological, sociological, or economic perspectives.

Among believers of the mainstream religions, these sects are seen as a deviant. According to sociologist Agus Bustanuddin, to the rise of religious sects in the last few years<sup>6</sup> can appear as a threat to security and order in society, since their rise has invited a sense of disapproval among followers of the mainstream religions. Among the religious sects currently flourishing in Indonesia are the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Qadiani Ahmadiyya is a sect in Islam which vigorously organizes its proselytization activities (*da'wa*) in order to submit the Muslim *umma* (community) under the leadership of a Caliph who is based in Qadian, India. It also believes that the fourth caliph Hazrat Tahir Ahmad is the highest leader in the Muslim world. The sect is said to have significantly contributed to the maintenance of Pancasila, or the five pillars of Indonesia's political ideology.<sup>7</sup> In Islam, the foundation of theology is constructed on the belief in the pillars of both the Islamic faith and the Islamic religion. Yet, right after the death of Prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community has

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<sup>4</sup> Abbas Langaji, "Dinamika Aliran Keagamaan Sempalan: Tinjauan Perspektif Sosiologi Agama," *Jurnal Hikmah*, Vol. XII, no. 1 (2016): 148.

<sup>5</sup> Humaria Azzahra, "Sektarianisme Dalam Sejarah Islam, *Jurnal Indo-Islamika*," *Islamika*, Vol. 9, no. 2 (2019): 179.

<sup>6</sup> Bustanuddin Agus, *Sosiologi Agama* (Padang: Andalas University Press, 2003), 35.

<sup>7</sup> Machfud, *Studi Tentang Jemaat Ahmadiyah Qadian Di Kotamadya Surabaya*, n.d., 1–2.

been divided into several groups or sects, one of which is the one that believes that the prophethood does not stop in Prophet Muhammad, but is succeeded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, with his holy book the *Tadhkira*.

Adian Husaini, chairman of Indonesian Islamic Proselytizing Institute (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, DDII), mentioned that the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI) has listed a number of features which are used to define a deviant sect. One of this feature is a refusal to one of the pillars of faith and of Islam.<sup>8</sup> One of those denying the pillars of faith and Islam is the Qadiani Ahmadiyya, indicated by their declaration of Tadzkirah is their holy book aside from the Qur'an, and that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the last prophet after the Prophet Muhammad. Yet, the Qadiani Ahmadiyya is well known for the care and solidarity among its members, evidenced among others by the high number of its social activities. This has in turn attracted many people to join the Ahmadiyya. In Ahmadiyah's teachings, one must be able to implement the teachings that came from Ghulam Ahmad.<sup>9</sup>

In Christianity, religious sects at odds with the religious mainstream are considered heretics. H. Berkhof and I.H. Enklaar maintained that, historically, heretics was referred to a small association in Christianity that deliberately alienated itself from the main Church. Its teachings were said to have one-sidedly emphasized the Christian Faith, and in general, its theology and pious practices were considered in opposition to the Bible. The heretics groups have become an object of study among the scholars. One of these groups is the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The conception of God in Jehovah's Witnesses differs from that of the Christianity, which is the Trinity. God according to them is monotheistic, which means that they believe only in one God, and there is no God but Jehovah.<sup>10</sup> They refused the concept of Trinity and maintained that Jesus was created by Jehovah, which according to them never subsided in a human's body. In addition, they also believed that their translation of

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<sup>8</sup> Hartono Ahmad Jaiz, *Nabi-Nabi Palsu Dan Para Penyesat Umat* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2002), 438.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Muhtador, "Khalifah Islamiyah Perspektif Ahmadiyah (Sebuah Gerakan Spiritual Keagamaan)," *Esetorik: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (2016): 89.

<sup>10</sup> Roni Ismail, "Konsep Ketuhanan Kristen Saksi Yehuwa", *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (2016): 113.

the Bible called "*New World Translation*" is truer than that of the Christianity's and the Catholicism's.<sup>11</sup>

The Jehovah's Witness is a sect in Protestantism. However, despite its understanding of the Bible has some differences from that of the mainstream in Christianity, the inclusion of the Jehovah's Witness in the Christianity cannot be denied. The sect of Jehovah's Witnesses was once prohibited in Indonesia because of their alleged threat to inciting a state of disorder in society especially among the Christian communities, and their alleged antithesis to the government aspects. Yet today, the sect has been granted permission by the Indonesian government to exist in the country.<sup>12</sup>

Some researchers have been conducted to examined the Qadiani Ahmadiyya have been conducted. Andries, for example, has studied the Ahmadiyya's views on the continuation of prophethood from Muhammad to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>13</sup>. There has been a research on reactions of Islamic organizations such as MUI and Nahdlatul Ulama over the alleged heresy of the Ahmadiyya.<sup>14</sup> Previous researches have also conducted to examine Jehovah's Witness, especially with regard to its rejection of the Christ as God but a prophet,<sup>15</sup> and the rejection of the Jehovah's Witnesses among the Christians.<sup>16</sup>

Despite there has been several studies examining the teachings of both the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses, no one has tried to conduct a comparative study between them. This research aims to analyze the differences and similarities between the two as well as to study the aspects of their religious teachings that are considered heretical. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to giving a better understanding to the community about the emergence and religious teachings of both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Qadiani Ahmadiyya.

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<sup>11</sup> Paulus Daun, *Bidat Kristen Dari Masa Ke Masa* (Manado: Yayasan Daun Family, 2002), 145–46.

<sup>12</sup> Dicky Sapto Winarto, "Aliran Atau Bidat Dalam Agama Kristen Protestan: Studi Kasus Saksi Yehuwa di Kota Medan" (Medan, UIN Sumatera Utara, 2017), I.

<sup>13</sup> Abdul Syukur, "Gerakan Dakwah Ahmadiyah (Studi Kasus Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia Desa Manis Lor Kecamatan Jalaksana Kabupaten Kuningan Jawa Barat)," *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 15, no. 2 (2017): 170.

<sup>14</sup> Flavius Floris Andries, "Identitas Jemaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia Dalam Konteks Multikulturalisme," *Humaniora*, Vol. 26, no. 2 (2014): 122–23.

<sup>15</sup> Roni Ismail, "Konsep Ketuhanan Kristen Saksi Yehuwa," 113.

<sup>16</sup> Arifuddin Ismail, "Kontradiksi Kehadiran Saksi-Saksi Yehuwa Sebagai Denominasi Kristen di Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Analisa*, Vol. 19, no. 2 (2012): 182.

This research is set as a qualitative one, as it tried to find out the meaning of the data as an effort to find the truth, by describing a phenomenon with a comparative method. This paper described, recorded, and analyzed a growing phenomenon of religious teachings, in terms of correlation and context contained in the object study, before it compared the theological teachings of both the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses to conceive their similarities, differences and alleged heresy. This research uses a phenomenological approach, examining religion from its essence. It tried to assess religion according to the understanding of its adherents, by classifying, comparing, and describing the religion without judgmental presumptions.

With regards to data collection and literature studies, this research used Tadhkira, the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, and other literatures related to the teachings of the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses, which were used as primary and secondary sources. The data were analyzed with the narrative technique analysis, which include narrating, describing, and analyzing the religious teachings of the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and Jehovah's Witnesses.

This paper found some uniqueness related to the religious teachings of the two sects. First, the Qadiani Ahmadiyya believes that the founder of Ahmadiyya is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who claimed to his followers that he was the last messenger on earth, and that the prophet Muhammad was not the last bearer of Allah's divine revelations, claiming that he too received revelation from Allah. "It is Allah who sent his messenger as His prophet (Mirza Ghulam Ahmad), the bearer of the true religion and guidance, surely Allah provided him a priority over all religions". (Tadhkira: 621). Furthermore, the Qadiani Ahmadiyya believes in the Tadhkira as the main holy scripture besides the Koran. The Tadhkira is a collection of revelations, dreams, and visions of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. They believe that the sacredness of Qadian and Rabwah are similar to that of Mecca and Madinah for Muslims. In the context of marriage, they allow men to marry women outside the Qadiani Ahmadiyya Qadian but on the other hand, prohibits women to marry men outside the Qadiani Ahmadiyya.

Second, the Jehovah's Witnesses views that Jesus Christ is a human being: he is a super man but not quite like the Lord. "The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Deuteronomy: 6: 4). Lord is greater than Jesus, He is the creator, eternal and immortal. He is almighty and has no opposition. Whereas Jesus is an ordinary man who has excellence and is a witness to the

Lord. The Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the Holy Spirit as God, and do not recognize the Holy Spirit as a living creature but only a power that comes from God Almighty. "And they built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart" (Jeremiah: 7:31).

## B. Literature Review

This study used several theories to help understand religious teachings of the two sects under study, which are alleged to be deviated from the mainstream teachings. In Indonesia, the term splinter movement usually refers to a religious movement or sect that is considered alien, or deviating from the faith, worship, and religious practice of the mainstream teachings. Ali Rokhmad, in his writing entitled *Aliran Sesat dan Hegemoni Ortodoksi* (Heretical Sects and the Hegemony of Orthodoxy) argued that this term, first used by Abdurrahman Wahid, is a general term since it does not have a special connotation of religious traditions, but is used for small groups that separate themselves (splint) from political parties or social organizations. A religious group that separates itself from the main group, is commonly termed "religious sect".<sup>17</sup>

A splinter movement usually consists of groups or movements that deliberately separated themselves from the mainstream group. They tend to be exclusive and are often critical to established scholars. In a sociological approach, "orthodoxy" and "splinter" are concepts that are not absolute and timeless, but are relative and dynamic. Orthodoxy or mainstream is the ideology held by the majority of the people.

Two German sociologists of religion, Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, had a major influence on theories of deviant sects throughout this century. Weber is famous for his thesis on the role of Protestant sects in the development of the spirit of capitalism in Europe, and his theory of charismatic leadership. Troeltsch, a close friend of Weber, developed some Weber ideas in his study on the emergence of sect in Europe in the medieval periods. He started his analysis by distinguishing two movements in which religious believers are conceptually affiliated and with which confronted: the church and the sect types. The church usually tries to encompass and

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<sup>17</sup> Wahyu Iryana, "Fenomena Gerakan Sempalan Islam di Indonesia," *Jurnal Tsaqofah & Tarikh*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (2018): 51.

dominate the entire society and the entire aspects of life. As an established entity, they tend to be conservative, formalistic, and compromising with the rulers and the political and economic elites. Within the church, there is a strict hierarchy, and there are religious clergies who claimed the monopoly upon knowledge and blessing, upon which the lay people depended.

The sect, on the contrary, is always small, but has an egalitarian form of relationships among its members. Members of religious sects tend to hold their principles very strongly, demand a close adherence to strict moral values, and distance themselves from the rulers and material pleasure. The sects usually claimed that their teachings are purer and more consistent with the divine revelation. They tend to make vivid distinction between their adherents who are considered as saints, and those outside their sects who are considered as laymen full of flaws and sins. Troeltsch explained that the sects usually first emerged among low-income and uneducated circles and before it spread to other circles. They often physically separated themselves from the surrounding community and rejected secular culture and science.

As stated by Martin van Bruinessen, the term splinter seems to be a translation of the word sectarian, a word with negative connotations, such as a protest against and separation from the majority, exclusiveness, a firm but rigid stance, claims of monopoly on truth and fanaticism. Even in Indonesia, there is a tendency to see the splinter movement as a threat to national stability and security.<sup>18</sup> According to him, for Indonesian Muslims orthodoxy is the mainstream, which is represented by institutions of Muslim scholars such as MUI, Nahdhah al-Ulama (NU), and Muhammadiyah. MUI as an institution of Muslim scholars established by the government has dominated the practices of orthodoxy, so that what is declared heretical by MUI will be used as a reference for the government, even though Muhammadiyah or NU have different opinions. Therefore, orthodoxy is an idea held by the majority of ulama and sometimes supported by the authorities. Meanwhile, assessment of heresy very much depends on the mainstream teachings. Such has created difficulties in taking an action, since a new school of religion is often seen as a competitor by the established, majority school.

Responding to the splinter movement's ideology, van Bruinessen argued that the 'wrong' characters of the splinter movement is

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<sup>18</sup> Kamil Kartapradja, *Aliran Kebatinan Dan Kepercayaan di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Masagung, 1985), 212.



a feature discernable in every religious sect. According to him, as such is caused by the members' lack of education, their limited knowledge of the religion, the their overwhelm amount of religious fervor. Most of the followers of religious traditions do not fully understand religious aspect as well as religious dimensions. There was inconsistency between the dimension of religious knowledge and the dimension of religious practices.

According to Azyumardi Azra, the emergence of religious teachings that deviate from the mainstream teachings is due to rapid socio-economic changes that have resulted in disorientation or psychological dislocation in certain societies. It can also be caused by dissatisfaction with mainstream religions, movements, or religious organizations because they are no longer able to accommodate their religious wanderings.<sup>19</sup> Azra's opinion is aligned with Kuntowidjoyo who saw that the cause of the emergence of a splintered religious movement was the sharpening polarization in society.<sup>20</sup>

### C. Discussion and Analysis

#### 1. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya Within Islam

In Islam, the Qadiani Ahmadiyya is seen as a religious sect whose teachings are contrary to the mainstream teachings of Islam. This is because the Ahmadiyya believes that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad. The Ahmadiyya believes that Muhammad is the last prophet who carried the sharia law. Yet, to them, this does not mean that the prophethood is ended. God will continue sending a prophet on earth. This prophet, however, does not bring forward a new sharia law: he will hold the sharia law of Muhammad, instead.<sup>21</sup>

In Islamic teachings, it is explained that the Prophet Muhammad is the prophet of the last world, the last prophet, and the closing of all prophets. He completed previous revelation, and there will be no prophethood afterward. Muhammad is likened to the final stone which both complemented and beautified a palace. Without this stone, the palace is neither beautiful nor magnificent, even its beauty will disappear. He is called, the *khatamun nabiyyin*, or the *akhirul anbiya*, which means, there will be no

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<sup>19</sup> Azra, *Konteks Berteologi Di Indonesia: Pengalaman Islam*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Kuntowidjoyo, *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi* (Bandung: Mizan, n.d.), 204.

<sup>21</sup> Chatib Saefullah, "Ahmadiyah: Perdebatan Teologis Dan Masa Depan Dakwah," *Jurnal ANIDA*, Vol. 15, no. 2 (2016): 230.

prophet as well as prophethood after him. The conception of Muhammad as the *khatamun nabiyyin* is based on the Qur'an and the Hadith. In the Qur'an, the conception is stated as follows:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

*"Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but He is the Messenger of Allah and the seal (last) of the prophets. And ever is Allah, of all things, knowing". (al-Ahzab:40).*

Likewise, in the Hadith narrated by Abu Daud, the conception of the last prophet is narrated as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عِيسَى قَالَا حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ عَنْ أَيُّوبَ عَنْ أَبِي قِلَابَةَ عَنْ أَبِي أَسْمَاءَ عَنْ ثَوْبَانَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: ... وَإِنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ فِي أُمَّتِي كَذَّابُونَ ثَلَاثُونَ كُلُّهُمْ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ نَبِيٌّ وَأَنَا خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي ...

Which means: *"Narrated from Sulaiman bin Harbin and Muhammad bin Isa they said: Ahmad bin Zaid from Ayyub from Abi Qilabah from Abi Asma 'from Sauban said: Rasulullah Saw said: ... and indeed there will come thirty liars to my people, each of them will tell the world that he is a prophet, but I am the last prophecy and there will be no more prophet after me". (Narrated by Abu Daud)*

The conception of Muhammad as the last prophet narrated in the hadith tradition give insights to us about the terms of prophethood and messengers delivered to Muhammad: that he is the last prophet (*khatamun Nabiyyin*) and there is no prophet after him. Before declaring the heretical satus of the Qadiani Ahmadiyya, MUI first conducted an in-depth study. MUI also has formulated 10 criteria for a religious sect to be labelled deviant.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it can be stated as explained by Adian Husaini as chairman of the Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council (DDII), that a religious sect is declared heretical if it includes one of the following criteria: <sup>23</sup>

- a. Denying one of the pillars of Islamic faith and Islamic religion.

<sup>22</sup> Andries, "Identitas Jemaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia Dalam Konteks Multikulturalisme," 119.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmad Jaiz Hartono, *Aliran Dan Paham Sesat Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2008), 433.

- b. Adhering to a theology outside the teachings of *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah* (the followers of tradition and community).
- c. Denying the authority of the prophetic tradition (the hadith).
- d. Denying the contents of the Qur'an, either partially or completely.
- e. Interpreting the Qur'an without following the established guidelines of the sciences of Qur'anic Exegesis.
- f. Denying the authority of the hadith as the main source of the teachings of Islam after the Qur'an.
- g. Do not paying respect to all prophets and messengers of Allah.
- h. Denying the position of Muhammad as *khatam al-anbiya'*.
- i. Amending the teachings of worships as taught by the sharia.
- j. Declaring other Muslims as apostates without accurate religious arguments.

According to these criteria, the religious teachings of the Qadiani Ahmadiyya Qadian is deviating from the mainstream teachings of Islam. As such is evidenced by the fact that some of its teachings area compatible with the ten criteria. It is these heretical understandings that frequently come upon the figure of this religious understanding, which the adherents do not realize. Unawareness is a reflection of a lack of faith. Unawareness will cover a person's heart against a truth that is a commitment between himself and his God. Then justify their act in aqidah Hanif, they assume do things as well as possible, but unaware that they made a big mistake.

## 2. The Jehovah's Witnesses Within Christianity

Religious understanding for the Jehovah's Witnesses is part of the teachings and the visions of the Christian Church (Christianity). Likewise, they study the Bible and follow the guidance of the Jesus Christ. Yet their understanding is more aptly considered as heretical to the Christianity. In Christianity, religious beliefs and ideologies contrary to the mainstream teachings of Christianity are called heretics. H. Berkhof and IH Enklaar stated that based on the historical aspects, heretics is a small colony in Christianity, which deliberately alienated or separated itself from the grand Church. Its teachings one-sidedly emphasize the faith of Christianity, and in general, its ritual and pious practices are not consistent with the Bible. Among the Church communities itself, many have rejected the presence of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Even though they think that the sect is part of the Christianity, its presence should be prohibited because it spread teachings that are outside the Christianity teachings.

Regarding its doctrines, the Jehovah's Witnesses held different doctrines from those of the Church. Among them, it refused the concept of Trinity, arguing that Jesus was a creation of God. Based on its doctrines, one of the leaders of PGI (Indonesia Church Association) said on an interview the Jehovah's Witnesses sect was not a member of Christianity. In fact, it was said to have deviated from the teachings of the Church, due to its statement that Jesus was not the Lord, but an ordinary human being.

"According to Mr. Simbolon, a priest in GPI, Jehovah's Witnesses is a sect that is not part of our religion, because its presence is unsettling for Christians, this sect must be anticipated and watched while they doing door-to-door ministry".<sup>24</sup>

### 3. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses: Some Differences

Seen from their religious doctrines, both the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses share some differences. They are the following:

The first relates to the concept of divinity. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya has differed from the Jehovah's Witnesses in terms of how their conception of God has related to the mainstream teachings of both Islam and Christianity. If the Qadiani Ahmadiyya still follows the theological conception of the divine of the mainstream teachings of Islam, the Jehovah's Witnesses is not. It does not follow the mainstream teachings in Christianity, believing that it is Jehovah who is the only true God. The Jehovah's Witnesses believes in a monotheistic concept of God. There is only one God that exists, and there is no God but Jehovah. The Bible says "The Jehovah is our God; the Jehovah is one." (Deuteronomy: 6: 4)"<sup>25</sup>

The second concerns with the holy scripture. Both the Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses have their own holy scriptures as the revelation of God and as a source of law, in addition to the holy scriptures of their respective religions. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya believes that the Qur'an is the first source of law for Muslims. But they also believe in Tadhkira, as a collection of revelations, dreams, and visions of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Ahmadiyya also still believes in the holy books of Torah, Zabur, Bible, and the Qur'an. However, Tadhkira is a holy book containing God's revelations that were revealed to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

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<sup>24</sup> TB. Simamora, November 30, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

through his dreams in Qadian. "*O Ahmad you have been made a messenger*" (*Tadhkira: 486*)<sup>26</sup> The Jehovah's Witnesses does not believe in the New Testament and only precepts in the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures made by Russell and perfected by Rutherford (Nuhrison, 2007: 286). The Jehovah's Witnesses does not believe in the Bible, which contains the journey of Jesus as believed by Christians in general. The Jehovah's Witnesses believes in the New World Translation of the Bible, which contains the Oneness of the Jehovah. Because it is only the Kingdom of Jehovah that can help mankind."<sup>27</sup>

The third is about the hell and the heaven. According to the Qadiani Ahmadiyya, the believers will go to heaven, and unbelievers will be eternal in hell. The Jehovah's Witnesses however, does not accept the hell, because Jehovah's attachment does not allow His people to be tormented. "Jehovah is the God of love. He will not authorize His people to suffer forever in hell. Therefore, hell does not exist in the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures mentioned, "somethings I did not command, nor did it enter my heart" (Jeremiah 7:31).<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses: Some Similarities

Based on the research findings, this study identifies several similarities between the two religious sects. *The first* similarity relates to the concept of divinity. The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Qadiani Ahmadiyya both believe in the monotheistic concept of divinity. According to them, there is only one God that exists, and thus they similarly reject the concept of Trinity.

*The second* similarity has many to do with the Scriptures. Both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Qadiani Ahmadiyya have a holy scripture that is complimentary to the holy scriptures of their respective mainstream teachings. The third similarity relates to the crucifixion of Jesus. The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Qadiani Ahmadiyya rejected the crucifixion of Jesus as atonement of human's sins. "Jesus was not crucified for atoning inherited sins of all mankind. There is no inherited sin. The sin is only obtained and can be redeemed by its perpetrators: the ones who have

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<sup>26</sup> Mahmudin, Desember 2019.

<sup>27</sup> TB. Simamora, *interview*.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

sinned.”<sup>29</sup> “The crucifixion of Jesus was not to atone for the sins committed by all mankind. The atonement for sins carried out by Jesus in the belief of Jehovah's witnesses only applies to the prophet Adam, not for all mankind”.<sup>30</sup>

#### D. Conclusion

The Qadiani Ahmadiyya and the Jehovah's Witnesses have shared a similar conception of monotheistic divinity and have similarly rejected the crucifixion of Jesus. On the other hands, the two sects have differed from each other with regard to the concept of hell. Still, results of the comparative analysis show that both sects have held religious teachings that are incompatible with those of their respective central religions, so that they are categorized as deviate from the mainstream and must be anticipated in religious life.

Stark disagreement within a religion often generates the emergence of a religious sect, which in the end will enrich the condition of religious diversity. Yet, deviant religious practices must be anticipated and warned, therefore, there should be a filter from the government and religious leaders to prevent its negative impacts, which may damage religious harmony in Indonesia.

#### Recommendations

- The Indonesian Ministry of Religion Affairs should increase its attention and monitoring toward the possible emergence of heretical groups within the religious community.
- The Indonesian Ministry of Religion should conduct an educational program for the followers of allegedly deviant religious sects.
- The central and regional governments should be able to bridge the existence of non-mainstream religious sects, by delivering a recommendation letter related to their religious activities.
- Religious higher educational institutions should develop a course on religious education and religious movements, in order to anticipate the emergence of new religious sects that are considered deviating from the mainstream religious teachings.

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<sup>29</sup> Mahmudin, *interview*.

<sup>30</sup> TB. Simamora, *interview*.

- Society should not be easily triggered and provoked by an act of religious proselytizing that comes with a promise (financial or whatever). [ ]

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